

**Subject: Motion of censure of Mayor Bell May 20, 2003**

**Date:** Wed, 21 May 2003 13:28:18 -0700

**From:** "Ernie Crist" <ernie\_crist@dnv.org>

**To:** "FONVCA (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>

**CC:** "Mayor and Council - DNV" <Council@dnv.org>, "Senior Management Committee" <managecomm@dnv.org>

A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

At the District Council meeting held on May 20, 2003 Councilor Crist submitted a motion calling for a Censure of Mayor Bell in connection with the termination of the District Municipal Manager, Gord Howie.

Contrary to established procedure, Mayor Bell, without consulting Council, had informed the Municipal Manager that he (Bell) would recommend to Council that the services of Mr. Howie be terminated.

Councilor Crist, in his rationale for the motion, stated that the issue was not whether or not termination of the services of Mr. Howie was justified or not but that Mayor Bell acted without consulting with Council first. Crist called Mayor Bell's actions arbitrary and discourteous.

Councilor Crist further stated that the unilateral actions by the Mayor constitute a dangerous precedent and must be challenged.

During Council debate Mayor Bell stated that he had acted in an arbitrary fashion because, among other reasons, he feared that Councillor Crist might divulge any information pertaining to this issue TO THE PUBLIC because he Councillor Crist had also divulged In Camera information to the press pertaining to the Northlands scandal.

This line of defense was repeated by Councillor Nixon during the Council debate.

What are the facts?

The outgoing 1999 to 2002 Council had passed a motion that there be a full audit of the Northlands Golf Course operation. This was after it had come to light that

a) information pertaining to an alleged embezzlement of an employee of Don Mac Holdings, the company operating the Northlands Golf Course, had been withheld from Council. It had come to light that the facts of the embezzlement were known to District staff on October 16 of 2002. Notwithstanding Staff's knowledge of the alleged embezzlement, District Staff urged the outgoing Council to renew the contract with Don Mac Holdings for another 5 years without informing Council of the embezzlement..

b) Mayor Bell claimed that he had not been informed about the embezzlement until November the 19, 2002 which was 3 days of after the municipal election held on November 16, 2002. To this very day the accuracy of this information has not been confirmed.

c) Although the outgoing Council had recommended that, in light of the Northlands scandal, there be a full and independent audit of the Northlands operations, Mayor Bell, with the assistance of the newly elected members of Council, reneged on the recommendations and squashed the motion calling for an audit.

In light of this clear attempt by Mayor Bell, acting with the assistance of the newly elected Council, to sweep the "Northlands scandal" under the rug, Councillor Crist made this information available to the public via the press. As Councillor Crist stated when challenged about his actions, in view of the attempt by Mayor Bell to sweep the matter under the rug, he (Councillor Crist) had no option other than to make all relevant information available to the public. He did so, he stated, in line with his oath to defend the public interest.


Councillor Crist further stated that, under the Local Government Act, there is a clear policy stipulating which items are genuine In Camera items and which are not. Councillor Crist has repeatedly challenged the ruling to put certain items on the In Camera Agenda when in his opinion clearly they should be dealt with in public. Councillor Crist has had an ongoing correspondence with the District Clerk to this effect.

The thrust of the local Government Act, as it pertains to In Camera Agenda items, is that only those items which would jeopardize the public interest if discussed in public may be discussed in Camera. The spirit and the intention of the Local government Act is clearly spelled out.

At no time did Councillor Crist violate either the spirit or the intent of the legislation. Claims to the contrary, including the recent one by both Councillor Nixon and Mayor Bell, are nothing more than red herrings. They will do nothing to restore the confidence of a badly deceived public - the result of crass manipulation of the democratic process by Mayor Bell.

By way of example, despite promises by Mayor Bell to release the findings of the Northlands audit, which was finally conducted as a result of public pressure, Mayor Bell still has not released the information not even to his own Council even though the audit was completed many weeks ago. The Mayor actions speak louder than his "bafflegab".

---

 <a href="#">winmail.dat</a>	<b>Name:</b> winmail.dat <b>Type:</b> application/ms-tnef <b>Encoding:</b> base64
---	---